

## **U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE**

### **U.S. EMBASSY KABUL PUBLIC AFFAIRS SECTION LOCAL GRANTS PROGRAM**

**Funding Opportunity Title:** Advancing Afghan Women's Economic Opportunity

**Funding Opportunity Number:** SCAKAB-12-AW-012-SCA-05232012

**CFDA Number:** 19.501

**Date Opened:** May 23, 2012

**Federal Agency Contact:** Ms. Cynthia Rafferty

**Email:** [kabulpdproposals@state.gov](mailto:kabulpdproposals@state.gov)

#### **I. Funding Opportunity Description**

The U.S. Embassy Kabul Public Affairs Section (PAS) of the U.S. Department of State is pleased to announce funding is available for programs to advance economic opportunities for women in Afghanistan by connecting them to the regional economy.

**Potential Initiatives:** Proposals should focus on the following four themes:

- Improving the Business Environment for Women
- Accessing Finance
- Expanding Markets through Trade
- Building Capacity through Business Associations, Mentoring, and Internships

**Proposal Examples:** Projects should address ways to improve linkages among women's businesses, ideas to connect businesses across borders, funding technical assistance to increase the use of technology or market readiness or facilitating exchanges between large and small firms to help them better compete in the market place. The Department of State is not likely to fund proposals for conferences or meetings.

**Proposal Requirements:** Proposals may be specific to Afghanistan, but we will give priority to those that are regional in nature, linking Afghanistan to other countries.

#### **II. Award Information**

**Funding Instrument Type:** Grant

**Floor of Individual Award Amounts:** \$20,000

**Ceiling of Individual Award Amounts:** \$250,000

The U.S. Embassy Kabul Public Affairs Section reserves the right to award less or more than the funds described in the absence of worthy applications or under such other circumstances as it may deem to be in the best interest of the U.S. government.

**Project and Budget Periods:** Projects must be completed in twelve months or less.

### **III. Eligibility Information: Unrestricted**

The U.S. Embassy Kabul Public Affairs Section encourages applications from all sectors: committed and organized civil-society organizations, private sector companies, local representatives of civil society, think tanks, non-governmental organizations, academic institutions, and individuals. U.S. NGOs may apply but preference is given to local NGOs or to partnerships that develop capacity with Afghan NGOs or employees and include plans to transfer programs to sustainable local management.

While not required, the U.S. Embassy Kabul Public Affairs Section encourages applicants to provide cost-sharing from additional sources in support of this project. The Public Affairs Section also encourages projects that use highly skilled volunteers as an element of cost-sharing. Applications should explain clearly other likely sources of funding and how the volunteers will be used.

### **IV. Application Submission and Deadline**

**Application Deadline:** Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis through July 30, 2012 or until funding is no longer available, whichever comes first. Please note: it is possible that this opportunity will close before July 30, 2012; applicants are encouraged to submit their proposals as early as possible.

**Application Submission Process:** Applicants must submit proposals electronically using Grants.gov or submit proposals to PAS Kabul directly at: [KabulPDProposals@state.gov](mailto:KabulPDProposals@state.gov). Applications are accepted in English only, and final grant agreements will be concluded in English.

Applicants opting to submit applications via email to [KabulPDProposals@state.gov](mailto:KabulPDProposals@state.gov) must include the Funding Opportunity Title and Funding Opportunity Number in the subject line of the email.

For those opting to apply through Grants.gov, thorough instructions on the application process are available at <http://www.grants.gov>. For questions relating to Grants.gov, please call the Grants.gov Contact Center at 1-800-518-4726.

**Begin the application process early**, as this will allow time to address any technical difficulties that may arise in advance of the deadline. There will be no exceptions to this application deadline. All applicants utilizing Grants.gov must register with Grants.gov prior to submitting an application. **Registering with Grants.gov is a one-time process; however, it could take as long as two weeks to have the registration validated and confirmed. Please begin the registration process immediately to ensure that the process is completed well in advance of the deadline for applications.** Until that process is complete, you will not be issued a user password for Grants.gov, which is required for application submission. There are four steps that you must complete before you are able to register: (1) Obtain a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number from Dun & Bradstreet (if your organization does not have one already) by calling 1-866-705-5711; (2) Register with Central Contractor Registry (CCR); (3) Register yourself as an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR); and (4) Be authorized as an AOR by your organization. For more information, go to [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov). Please note that your CCR registration must be annually

renewed. Failure to renew your CCR registration may prohibit submission of a grant application through Grants.gov.

**Questions:** For questions about this solicitation, contact Cynthia Rafferty, Grants Manager, Public Affairs Section, U.S. Embassy, Kabul, Afghanistan, at: Email: [KabulPDProposals@state.gov](mailto:KabulPDProposals@state.gov) (*Preferred method of communication*).

## V. Application Components

All proposals must include the following:

1. **Executive Summary:** Provide a summary of the project description (no more than two pages) with reference to the amount and duration of the funding request.
2. **Narrative:** Outline a plan of action that describes the scope and detail of how the proposed work will be accomplished. Account for all functions or activities identified in the application. Cite factors that might accelerate or decelerate the work and state reasons for taking the proposed approach rather than alternatives. Describe any unusual features of the project, such as design or technological innovations, reductions in cost or time, or extraordinary social and community involvement.

Provide quantitative monthly or quarterly projections of the accomplishments to be achieved for each function or activity in such terms as the number of people to be served and the number of activities accomplished. When accomplishments cannot be quantified by activity or function, list them in chronological order to show the schedule of accomplishments and their target dates. List those organizations, cooperating entities, consultants, or other key individuals who will work on the project, along with a short description of the nature of their effort or contribution.

3. **Budget:** Applicants must complete and submit a detailed budget spreadsheet and may also submit a budget narrative.
4. **Standard Form 424:** applicants are required to include the Federal Assistance Application (Standard Form 424), which is available, along with guidance for completing this form, at: [http://fa.statebuy.state.gov/content.asp?content\\_id=20&menu\\_id=68](http://fa.statebuy.state.gov/content.asp?content_id=20&menu_id=68) or at [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov).

### Application Evaluation Criteria:

Each application submitted under this announcement will be evaluated and rated on the basis of the following evaluation criteria. The criteria are designed to assess the quality of the proposed project, and to determine the likelihood of its success. The criteria are closely related and are considered as a whole in judging the overall quality of an application. Applications will be reviewed on the basis of their fullness, coherence, clarity, and attention to detail. Points are awarded only to applications that are responsive within the context of this program announcement.

Goals and Objectives – The project is likely to provide maximum impact in achieving the proposed results including the extent to which the proposed project advances the expansion of economic opportunities for women and supports the New Silk Road vision of linking Central and South Asia via Afghanistan through trade. Applicant demonstrates it is able to measure program success against key indicators and provide milestones to indicate progress toward goals. (30 points)

Strengths and Innovation – Applicant clearly describes how its proposal will address the requested program within the proposed time frame and articulates an innovative strategy or plan. The project builds women's capacity and strengthens Afghanistan's economic foundation in ways that will clearly be sustained beyond the project end date. (30 points)

Organizational Capacity – The organization has expertise and demonstrates the ability to perform the proposed activities. (30 points)

Budget and Budget Justification – The budget and narrative justification are reasonable in relation to the proposed activities and anticipated results and the plan for services is realistic. (10 points)

## **VI. Award Administration**

**Award Notices:** The grant award or cooperative agreement shall be written, signed, awarded, and administered by the Grants Officer. The Grants Officer is the U.S. government official delegated the authority by the U.S. Department of State Procurement Executive to write, award, and administer grants and cooperative agreements. The assistance award agreement is the authorizing document and it will be provided to the recipient. Organizations whose applications will not be funded will also be notified in writing.

**Anticipated Time to Award:** Applicants should expect to be notified of the recommended concepts within 90 days after the submission deadline.

**Reporting Requirements:** All awards issued under this announcement will require both program and financial reports on a frequency specified in the award agreement. The disbursement of funds may be tied to submission of these reports in a timely manner. All other details related to award administration will be specified in award agreement as well.